

LACDMH CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF MHSA HOUSING

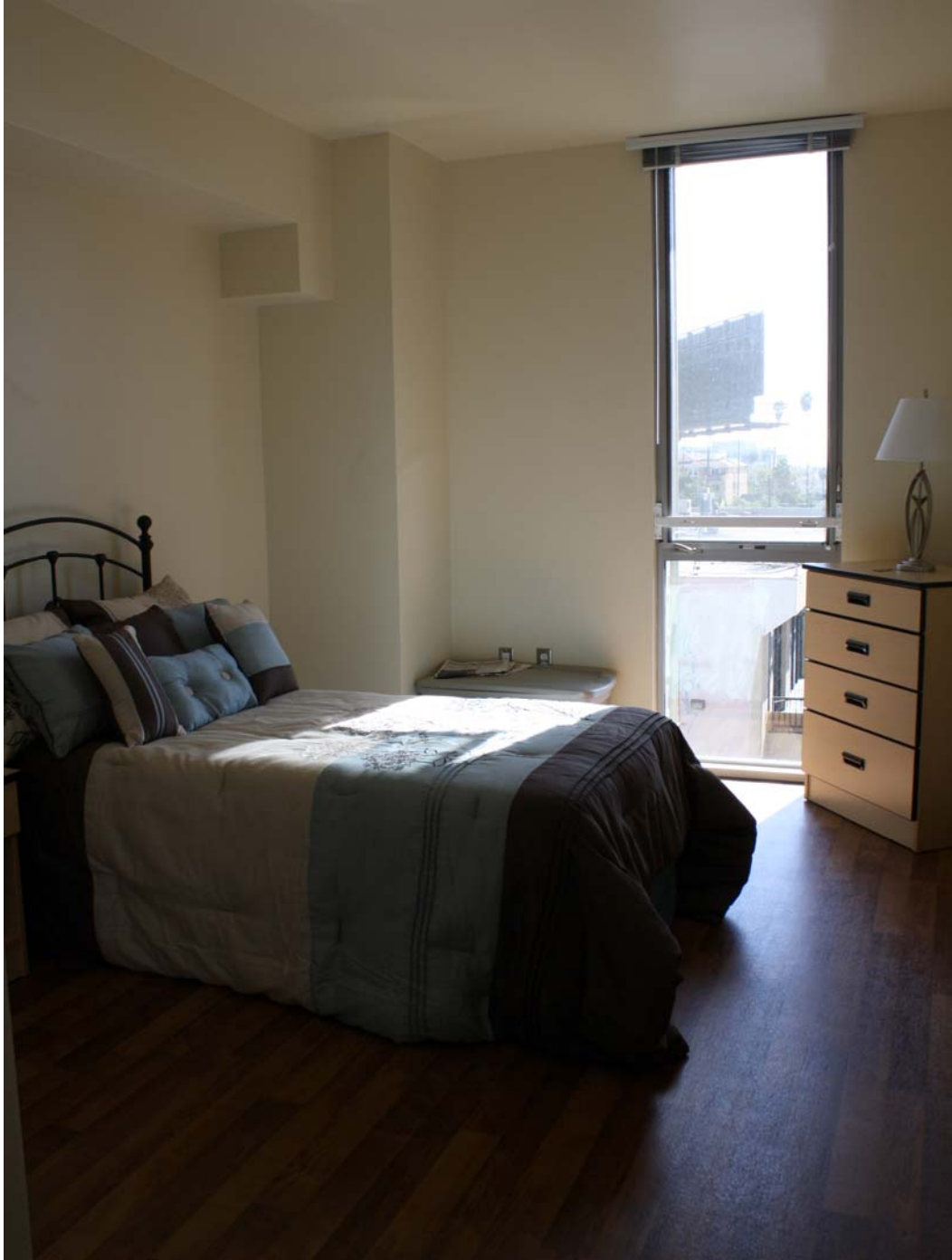
By Kathleen Piché, Public Affairs Director



Author of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and California State Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg was on hand to see his work in action at the five-year celebration of the MHSA Housing Program at the Villas at Gower on Friday, November 09, 2012. In addition to state and local dignitaries, many public and private partners attended the celebration sponsored by LACMDH and brought illustrated renderings of MHSA funded housing projects.



Co-sponsored by the Supportive Housing Alliance, the event recognized the collaborative partnerships that made the 33 current housing projects partially funded by the MHSA Housing Program a reality. MHSA has made housing possible for thousands of formerly homeless persons with a diagnosis of mental illness and their families, including Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and older adults. A total of 746 units have been completed or are in the process of completion that offer beautiful, safe and affordable permanent supportive housing with on and off-site mental health services to provide the supports necessary to help formerly homeless individuals and families live successfully in the community.



Dora Gallo, CEO for A Community of Friends, welcomed the audience and introduced Marvin Southard, DSW, LACMDH Director, who served as master of ceremonies. Dr. Southard introduced the illustrious speakers, including two formerly homeless LACDMH clients that are now tenants in two different MHSA funded apartment buildings, L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Third District; Doug Guthrie, President and CEO, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles; Claudia Cappio, Executive Director, California Housing Finance Agency; Darrell Steinberg and Robin Kay, LACDMH Chief Deputy Director.



All speakers were in agreement that the best way to get people off the streets, including large numbers of veterans and children, is by using the housing first model to help them find a permanent home. All agreed that what has been accomplished by building homes that get people off the street and into a safe affordable home is “monumental” in their recovery and that it saves lives. All are looking forward to creating more housing for individuals and families who are homeless and that have medical, mental health and substance use issues.



"Nothing has been more important in my career than the passage of MHSA," Darrell Steinberg stated. "It's time to treat people with dignity and provide support for them to live in the community."

